



# FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY



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## *Information Release*

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## Board Announces 2016 Elly Doyle Park Service Award Winners

The Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) Board has named two organizations and one individual as recipients of the 2016 Elly Doyle Park Service Awards. These awards recognize outstanding volunteer service to the Park Authority and are the agency's top honor for volunteer service.

The Friends of Riverbend Park (FORB) is a small but important organization that takes an active role in community discussions about Riverbend Park's mission, community concerns and aspirations as well as supporting important park programs through funding and volunteer initiatives. Their efforts have sustained six college-level interns at the park, and their donations to the park include field trip scholarships, a snow-plow, canoes, a telescope, new exhibit cases and office furniture. Since 2007, their donations have totaled more than \$150,000. They provide an invaluable link to neighbors and park users and have been instrumental in the continued success of this ever popular park.

During the 2015-16 season, 28 Spring Hill Au Pairs from 11 countries contributed 3,336 volunteer hours to FCPA. This service is invaluable; however, if measured by national standards for volunteer service hours, this contribution would be valued at \$87,036 in terms of savings to agency. This group was praised for helping to maintain the Spring Hill RECenter, serving as translators, providing administrative support, removing litter and invasive species from the grounds, and helping with special events. The au pairs were characterized by site staff as having "incredible character, versatility, a hard work ethic and a tremendous amount of drive."

Michael Mescher is being honored for his contributions at several park sites. A Civil War historian and reenactor, Mescher has been a volunteer interpreter at Sully Historic Site for more than 20 years. He also provides expertise to E.C. Lawrence Park and Green Spring Gardens. He is a popular re-enactor during Sully's Civil War Weekend and conducts the "musket drill" with children. He volunteers at Sully's summer camps and the Candlelight tours, and his dedication to education, interpretation and preservation make him a sought-after personality for Civil War events.

Elly Doyle Special Recognition awards will go to:

- Mary Jane Medeiros, who for seven years has helped Green Spring Gardens thrive and has served as a Master Gardener and as a member of the Friends of Green Spring.
- Fernando Mendez, a long-time member of the Friends of Nottoway Park, who oversees the Nottoway Garden plots and has helped with the Nottoway Easter Egg Hunt, summer concerts and the invasive management program.



If accommodations and/or alternative formats are needed, please call (703) 324-8563, at least 10 working days in advance of the registration deadline or event. TTY (703) 803-3354.

- Brian Gritte, who works with the Volunteer Program in Park Services and helped coordinate the transition to the new Volunteer Management software.

The Elly Doyle Park Service Award program was established by the Fairfax County Park Authority in 1988 in recognition of former board member and Chair Ellamae Doyle's years of outstanding service. Awards will be presented at a gala evening ceremony honoring dozens of park volunteers as well as local philanthropists, historians and environmentalists in November. The awards program is sponsored in part by the Fairfax County Park Foundation. For additional information, please contact the Public Information Office at 703-324-8662.